

R 250904Z FEB 93
FM USMISSION PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3632
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 00577

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [UNTAC](#) [CB](#)
SUBJECT: HOR NAMHONG VIEWS THE FUTURE

11. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. SOC FOREIGN MINISTER HOR NAMHONG TOOK ME ASIDE DURING UNTAC'S DONORS REVIEW MEETING ON REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT FEBRUARY 25. AFTER ASKING ABOUT THE CORE GROUP MEETING ON CAMBODIA, HE TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO SPEAK FRANKLY ABOUT THE SITUATION FACING CAMBODIA, EMPHASIZING THE NEED TO FIGHT THE KR, EXPRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT FUNCINPEC AND THE KPNLF BUT SEEING COOPERATION WITH THEM IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT, EXAMINING PRINCE SIHANOUK'S ROLE, AND PROMISING THAT THERE WILL BE A TRANSFER OF POWER, WHOEVER WINS. HOR WAS PARTICULARLY CANDID IN WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. END SUMMARY.

13. MINISTER HOR NAMHONG'S PRINCIPAL POINTS:

-- THE KHMER ROUGE ARE THE PROBLEM AND MUST BE FOUGHT MILITARILY. CPAF HAS THE ABILITY TO TAKE PAILIN, BUT HUN SEN IS HOLDING BACK HIS ARMY. I OBSERVED THAT ANY SUCH ATTACK COULD PRODUCE HOSTILE KR ACTION ELSEWHERE IN CAMBODIA, WHICH COULD ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE. HE RESPONDED THAT, SOONER OR LATER, ONE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT, CLAIMING THAT IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT, SUBSEQUENT TO THE ELECTIONS, THE KR WILL BEGIN LAUNCHING ATTACKS.

-- IF ONE DOES NOT FIGHT NOW, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO TAKE ON THE FIGHT. IF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY WINS THE MAJORITY OF THE VOTES, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT YOU WILL SEE IT TAKE OFFENSIVE ACTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF FUNCINPEC OR THE KPNLF WINS, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THEY WILL SEEK TO BRING THE KR INTO A NEW GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN FIGHT. THIS IS SOMETHING TO WHICH THE SOC IS UNALTERABLY OPPOSED. PRINCE RANARIDDH HAD JOKED WITH HOR NAMHONG ONCE ABOUT THIS, BUT THE LATTER SAW SERIOUSNESS BEHIND RANARIDDH'S JOKING.

-- PRINCE SIHANOUK SEEMS TO WANT TO BRING THE KR IN, AS WELL, IN ORDER TO HAVE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. I RESPONDED THAT WASHINGTON TAKES A DIM VIEW OF SUCH A MOVE. THE KR HAVE WITHDRAWN THEMSELVES FROM THE PROCESS, AND IT SEEMS STRANGE TO REWARD NON-PLAYERS IN THIS WAY. HOR NAMHONG SAID THAT THE BIG POWERS SUCH AS THE U.S. AND FRANCE SHOULD TALK TO THE PRINCE TO DISSUADE HIM FROM TAKING SUCH A STEP. TO MY COMMENT THAT THE PRINCE WOULD HARDLY BE PLEASED BY FOREIGN MEDDLING AND THAT IT MAY BE BETTER FOR CAMBODIANS THEMSELVES TO TALK TO HIM, HOR NAMHONG SAID THE PRINCE WOULD INDEED BE ANGERED BY ANYTHING FOREIGNERS WOULD SAY ON THIS ISSUE. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER HUN SEN HAD BEEN ABLE TO HAVE ANY FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRINCE ON THIS ISSUE, BUT THE LATTER WILL NOT LISTEN TO CAMBODIANS, EITHER. INDEED, HE LISTENS TO FOREIGNERS MORE THAN TO CAMBODIANS. THE PRINCE HAS NEVER BEEN WILLING TO LISTEN TO ANYONE SINCE HE WAS BORN; THIS IS THE PROBLEM TODAY AND IT WILL BE A CONTINUING PROBLEM.

-- THE PRINCE IS PLAYING THE GAME NOW OF CLAIMING THAT HE IS THE ONLY PERSON CAPABLE OF SAVING THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION. HE TRIED THIS IN BOTH 1970 AND 1975, AND IT DID NOT WORK. ONE FEARS THAT THE SITUATION MAY BE MORE SERIOUS THAN HE CAN HANDLE. NOT ONE MAN BUT ONLY CAMBODIANS WORKING TOGETHER WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE POST-ELECTION CHALLENGES.

-- THE SOC, FUNCINPEC, AND KPNLF CAN WORK TOGETHER IN A FUTURE GOVERNMENT. DISPUTES THAT EXIST AMONG THEM ARE OF A PERSONAL NATURE, E.G., HUN SEN VS. SON SANN, RANARIDDH VS. CHAKRAPONG. THEY ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO PREVENT THE KIND OF COOPERATION THAT WILL ENABLE THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO WORK.

-- RESPONDING TO MY CONCERN THAT THE SOC, WHILE IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY OBTAIN A DECENT NUMBER OF VOTES IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION, MAY NEVERTHELESS REFUSE TO TURN OVER THE REAL LEVERS OF POWER TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT, HOR NAMHONG AFFIRMED THAT POWER WILL BE TURNED OVER, WHATEVER THE RESULTS. THE SOC SPOKESMAN HAS STATED THIS PUBLICLY, AND IT WILL HAPPEN.

-- IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ME TO MEET AGAIN WITH HUN SEN TO REVIEW THE SITUATION WHEN HE RETURNS FROM HIS INTERNAL TRAVELS (I.E., TELLING LOCAL OFFICIALS THEY ARE NOT TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE.) AFTER HIS CURRENT VISIT TO KAMPOT, HE WILL BE BACK IN PHNOM PENH LATER NEXT WEEK.

¶4. COMMENT. HOR NAMHONG IS CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE POST-ELECTIONS SITUATION. HE HAD NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIM THAT THE KR WILL THEN MOVE TO OPEN WARFARE. WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HIS STATEMENT THAT FUNCINPEC AND THE KPNLF WILL SEEK TO BRING THE KR INTO A NEW GOVERNMENT IS VALID. THEY HAVE BOTH INDICATED TO US THAT THEY WILL WANT TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO GET THE KR TO COOPERATE, BUT THIS IS NOT THE SAME THING. ON THE OTHER HAND, HOR WAS REASSURING REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOC, FUNCINPEC, AND THE KPNLF IN A NEW GOVERNMENT, A VIEW WE SHARE. WHERE HE WAS PARTICULARLY OUTSPOKEN WAS ABOUT PRINCE SIHANOUK, VIEWS THAT WOULD MAKE REAL PROBLEMS FOR HOR NAMHONG WERE THEY TO BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE BUT ONES WHICH MANY CAMBODIAN INTELLECTUALS SHARE. SIHANOUK REMAINS INDISPENSABLE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROCESS, PARTICULARLY IN ESTABLISHING INSTITUTIONS WHICH CAN HELP ASSURE THAT THERE IS A RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAS HIS LIMITS, AND THE SITUATION WILL WARRANT VERY CLOSE WATCHING.

TWINING